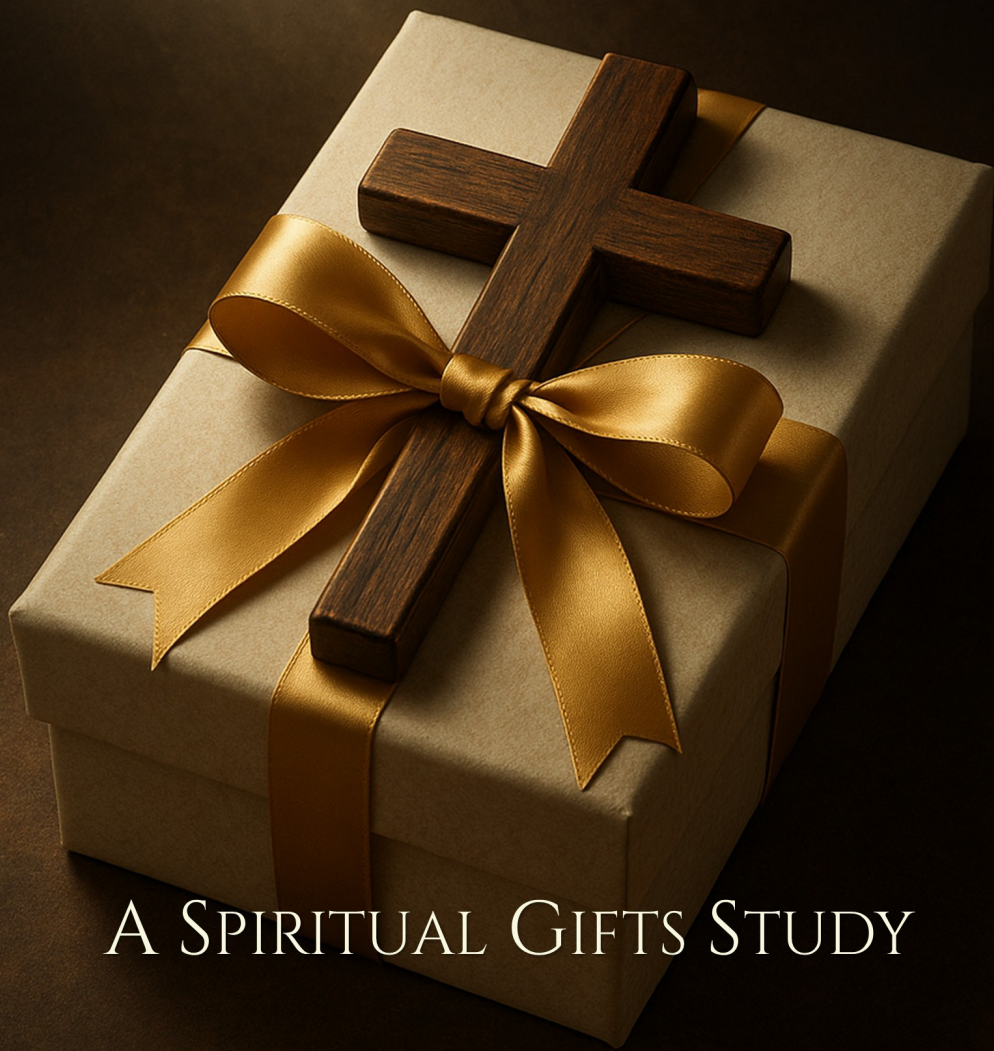


# Χάρις

CHARIS—GOD'S GRACE GIFTS



A SPIRITUAL GIFTS STUDY

BY DAVID O. HARRISON

CHARIS—GOD’S GRACE GIFTS

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CHARIS

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**B**orn and raised in England, David Harrison immigrated to Canada in 1973 at the age of 21. Life took a decisive turn when, at 35, he became a follower of Jesus Christ—a shift that would shape everything to come.

For 25 years, David was active at a Brethren Bible Chapel in Scarborough, serving ten of those years as an elder. At the same time, he ran a thriving audiovisual integration business in Toronto, equipping universities, law firms, and financial institutions with cutting-edge communication technology.

In 2006, David launched Bus Stop Bible Studies, a national outreach that placed Scripture-based messages on public transit systems across Canada—it's estimated that those messages were seen more than 1.25 billion times, each offering the hope of God's Word. He also served as Board Chair for Daystar Native Christian Outreach on Manitoulin Island for a decade.

"Retired" in name only, David and his wife Wendy host guests at their award-winning Airbnb in Muskoka, Ontario—recognized as Ontario's Most Hospitable Hosts in both 2021 and 2023. They attend Muskoka Community Church in Port Sydney.

The man who once failed English in school has since discovered a calling he never expected: writing. To date, David has authored ten original titles and published six group study guides. He is also passionately working on a lifelong project to "translate" the entire library of C.S. Lewis into everyday English—seven volumes completed and counting, three of which became Amazon bestsellers. Yet among all his works, he considers, *FRESH START, CHURCH—GOD'S WAY*, to be his most important to date; a heartfelt call for the Church to recapture the simplicity, clarity, and vitality of the early believers.

DEDICATION

*To my dear wife, Wendy,  
who has humbly used her gift of wisdom  
to bless others.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> A word of wisdom must not only be heard, it must be received in order for it to bear fruit.



## COVER IMAGE

*The Charis cover was designed to capture one truth –  
God’s grace is the most beautiful gift you’ll ever unwrap.”*

## INTRODUCTION

**D**ear Reader,

I may have set myself an almost impossible task—to define *charis* (pronounced *kariis*). In Greek, Paul uses the word *charis*—grace—to describe what we now call spiritual gifts. From it, we get *charismata*, the root of our word *charismatic*. But its meaning reminds us that these gifts are not trophies for hard work or rewards for personality. They are *grace gifts*—unearned, undeserved, divinely given. Perhaps we would understand them better if we stopped calling them anything else and simply named them for what they are.

And we must never forget their importance. *Grace gifts* are not secondary to the church’s mission; they are essential to its health and vitality.

But what happens when these gifts are overlooked, dismissed, or even silenced—when the church forgets to function as a body? The consequences are more than a few empty seats or quiet corners. The church begins to hobble along, aching where it was meant to be strong, weary where it was meant to be vibrant. Like joints stiffened with arthritis, movement is possible, but the joy of freedom is gone. Yet God does not leave His people in this condition. The same Spirit who breathes gifts into the church also brings renewal, loosening what has grown rigid and restoring strength where weakness has taken root. When every member offers their Spirit-given part, the body no longer limps—it rises, runs, and reflects the fullness of Christ Himself.

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When members drift away — or worse, are never invited to use the gifts God has entrusted to them — the whole church suffers. Each neglected gift leaves a gap. Each silenced voice diminishes the harmony. The Church was never designed to rest on the shoulders of a few. It was created to flourish when every believer is alive, engaged, and contributing their Spirit-bestowed grace.

Paul's image of the church as Christ's body is more than a clever metaphor — it is living theology:

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other."

Romans 12:4–5

Picture your own body trying to function without a leg, without sight, or without speech. Survival might still be possible, but thriving would not. And yet, all around the world, churches limp along as if vital organs were missing. We claim belief in the Spirit's power, but too often ignore — or even suppress — the very gifts that make His presence visible.

The purpose of this book is to help you discern the grace gift that God has already given you, and to discover the joy of using it. Confusion in this area is common, and the signs of misalignment are easy to spot. It feels like trying to walk in shoes that don't fit — too tight, and they pinch with every step; too loose, and you stumble and trip. You can still move, but only with discomfort and discouragement. Those shoes were never meant for you.

But when you find the shoes that fit — designed for your feet alone — everything changes. Walking feels natural, almost effortless. You stop thinking about every painful step and begin to enjoy the journey. In the same way, when you begin serving in the place of your true giftedness, you discover energy instead of exhaustion, joy instead of drudgery, purpose instead of

frustration. The right fit doesn’t just make life easier — it allows you to flourish as God intended.

God’s grace gifts always harmonize with your character and often complement your natural abilities. They are like shoes crafted by the Master Shoemaker Himself—perfectly fitted for both comfort and endurance. When you walk in the gift He has given, it feels right and it looks right, because it is right.

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One of my dearest friends is Steve. For years, everyone has known him as “Pastor Steve.” He had grown up in his community and served as a youth leader before he and his wife moved away for a season. When they felt God calling them back, the church was limping—attendance was dwindling, the spiritual fire had cooled, and the congregation longed for direction. They asked Steve to step in as pastor, and with a servant’s heart, he said yes.

Steve is a gifted teacher and a natural builder. Under his leadership, the church began to flourish again. The seats filled, energy returned, and plans for expansion were already underway—until COVID hit. Suddenly, everything changed. Yet Steve didn’t shrink back. He kept showing up, visiting members in their driveways, dropping off coffee, praying with them on porches, listening through car windows. For two long years, he poured himself out. And then his strength broke. The weight of carrying so many hearts, coupled with the loneliness of shepherding in isolation, became too much. He collapsed under the burden and stepped away.

During his time away, Steve did something few leaders allow themselves to do—he stopped. He sat with God. He read. He listened. He prayed. And slowly, the truth surfaced: God had never called Steve to be a pastor. He had called him to be an apostle—a rebuilder, a pioneer, a foundation-layer. Steve had rebuilt a church on the outside but taken on a role God had not assigned him. No wonder the load nearly crushed him.

Now, something remarkable is happening. Steve is no longer “Pastor Steve.” He’s simply Steve—walking in the role God has truly given him. Pastoral care has been entrusted to others, those who find joy in sitting at sickbeds, making phone calls, and nurturing souls day by day. Steve is back to building, laying foundations for what God wants to do in that community. And this time, it feels light, because the yoke is finally the one God tailored for him.

Their church is beginning a journey together, studying spiritual gifts so that *every* member knows how God has wired them and how their gifts can serve the body. And as I listened to Steve share his story, I couldn’t help but feel a holy anticipation. If they keep to this path—God’s path—the ripple effect will be profound. The church will not only be rebuilt, but the community it serves will be transformed, and the Kingdom of Heaven will come.

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You *have been* entrusted with *charis*—a grace gift with a Divine purpose woven into it. Think of Joseph’s story.<sup>2</sup> At first glance, it’s tempting to see him as God’s favourite, but that’s not why he was chosen. He was set apart for a purpose, not for his personal greatness. His brothers, though deeply flawed in their choices, were loved by God no less than Joseph. Yet Joseph was entrusted with a responsibility that led him through betrayal, injustice, and years of waiting, all so that God’s greater plan could unfold.

The same is true for you. It’s all too easy to slip into the trap of comparison—someone else’s beauty, strength, intelligence, or wealth. But every time you measure your worth against theirs, you lose. What looks like a blessing in another life may, in God’s bigger story, be a road paved with pain and sacrifice. Maturity comes when you stop asking, “Why not me?” and instead lean into the question, “Who has God made me to be, and what is my purpose?”

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<sup>2</sup> Genesis 37-41

## CHARIS—GOD’S GRACE GIFTS

God calls you to walk faithfully *in your lane*, to embrace the life He has given you. He sees you, He knows you, and His plans for you are neither accidental nor small. Every encounter, every challenge, every open door may be His whisper to your soul—an invitation to notice His hand and trust His presence.

And remember, this isn’t just about you alone. As part of Christ’s body, you are not called to watch from the sidelines but to live with purpose, to answer His call, and to pour yourself out for the sake of others. God’s purpose is larger than your doubts, stronger than your comparisons, and always directed toward His good plans for His people.

Your *charis* is God’s personal equipping for the journey ahead. With it, He prepares you for the very path He has placed beneath your feet. And if you are willing to trust Him, He will indeed do greater things through you—more than you could possibly imagine.

There are many tools designed to help you identify your spiritual gifts, and some can be useful. But perhaps the most reliable way is through the eyes of others. Ask mature believers who know you well—especially those with discernment and wisdom—*What do you see as my defining spiritual gift? What part of the body am I in our local church?* Ask more than one person, and listen carefully for the common threads in their answers.

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Scripture lists 32 distinct grace gifts. We don’t get to pick and choose among them, yet Paul urges us to...

Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way."

1 Corinthians 12:31

At first glance, that sounds self-contradictory—how can we desire gifts that are not ours to select? Perhaps the confusion lies in the



chapter division we find between 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. And it would have also been helpful if Paul had used a colon after ‘gifts’. But the colon ( : ) as we use it in English is not part of ancient Greek punctuation. If the chapters flowed as one, we would see that Paul is pointing us not to specific gifts but to a greater posture. Here is the passage, colon included...

“Now eagerly desire the greater gifts:

And now I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal... And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the *greatest* of these is love.”

Faith, hope, and love—these are the gifts given to every believer, regardless of the others God may choose to bestow. They are the “greater gifts” Paul tells us to pursue. You might even find yourself praying:

Lord, give me deeper **faith** to trust You and Your Word. Give me stronger **hope** that clings to eternal life no matter my circumstances. Give me greater **love** so that I may reflect Your heart in tangible, selfless ways.”

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Some people divide spiritual gifts into “*charismatic*” and “*non-charismatic*,” but Scripture *never* makes such a distinction. Every gift is *charis*—a grace gift. The gift of mercy is no less vital, no less Spirit-breathed, than the gift of healing. Paul himself places *administration* right alongside *various kinds of tongues*. Side by side, equal in origin, equal in purpose. A body is never complete when even one part is missing. How much more so when most of the parts are ignored? If a church highlights only two or three gifts while neglecting the rest, it risks overlooking the richness God intended. The result can feel flat, even lacklustre, because the full

harmony of grace is silenced when only a fraction of the instruments are playing.

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A final word belongs to those who carry the mantle of church leadership. If you step into this role, settle first in your heart that it is indeed your *charis*—your *grace gift*. If it is not, the weight will eventually crush you, for you will be shouldering a burden God never asked you to bear. But if it is your gift, then the call is not only possible—it is life-giving.

Your primary responsibility is not to perform every task or carry every ministry. It is to make sure that every member of the flock knows their own grace gift, and just as importantly, learns how to walk in it. This is the heartbeat of healthy leadership: equipping the saints, not exhausting the leaders. In larger congregations, this calling may, and should, be shared among others, but the principle remains unchanged.

To leave the people in ignorance of their God-given gifts is to starve the church at its root. But when leaders help men and women discover what God has placed within them and teach them how to use it for the good of the body, the church flourishes. Each believer grows, the body is strengthened, and Christ is glorified. Anything less leaves the church malnourished.

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So, the truth is this: God has entrusted you with a gift of His Spirit. And when you discover it, nurture it, and use it for His glory, you strengthen the whole church. More than that—you become part of the radiant testimony of Christ alive in His people.

More crucially, ask God to affirm your giftedness. As you read through the list of *grace gifts* presented in this book, ask Jesus:

Lord Jesus, by your Spirit, affirm in me *my charis*, the gift(s) that have *my* name on them. Let me not doubt, regardless of how incredible they may seem in the

## INTRODUCTION

moment, to know that these are ‘my shoes’ —made especially for me to follow you in.

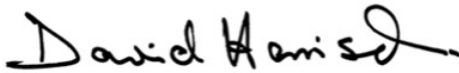
And then, Lord, help me to use my *charis* for your glory, help me to use *my charis* to build your church, to do *even greater things* than You! —because that is what You promised me, and, here and now, I am claiming that promise!<sup>3</sup>

Jesus, I also dare to ask that you will use me to accomplish ‘the seemingly impossible’, because I am asking in your name, and *that* is where *my* power is!

Thank you.

P.S. Lord, when you *do* use me to do the ‘greater things’, help me to remain humble, so that you receive ALL the glory.

In the perpetual wonder of grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Harrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

David O. Harrison, Author

dohauthor@gmail.com

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<sup>3</sup> Jesus said, “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” John 14:12

In Greek, *charis* (Χάρις)—it means grace—God’s unstoppable, unearned favor. But grace is not passive. It moves. It builds. It equips. It transforms ordinary believers into carriers of divine power.

In **Charis: God’s Grace Gifts**, the veil is pulled back on one of Scripture’s most overlooked truths: grace comes not only to save us, but to arm us. Every believer is entrusted with spiritual gifts—supernatural abilities tailored by the Spirit to meet the needs of a broken, restless world.

From the pulpit to the kitchen table, from acts of bold leadership to whispers of compassion, these gifts are the lifelines God throws to His people. They are not suggestions. They are assignments. And when each gift operates in harmony, the Church becomes an unstoppable force of hope and healing.

**Through vivid storytelling**, practical teaching, and deep biblical insight, this book will help you discover your place in God’s plan—and awaken the grace gift within you.

The question is no longer if you are gifted. It’s what you will do with what you’ve been given.



David Harrison is an author dedicated to guiding readers on their faith journeys and deepening understanding of biblical principles. Born in England and now residing in Canada, David discovered his passion for writing during the pandemic. His works, which include *FRESH START—Church God’s Way*, and *Mere Christianity in Everyday English*, which reinterprets C.S. Lewis’s classic for modern readers, have resonated widely. Through his Biblical Issues Explored Logically series, David addresses contemporary challenges to the church, calling for a return to foundational teachings.

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